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# SALVE REGINA UNIVERSITY FACULTY ASSEMBLY

## Minutes of the Meeting of April 7, 2003

Johnelle Luciani RSM, Speaker of the Assembly, presided.

### 1. **Speaker's Announcements.**

The joint administration-faculty Commission on the Faculty Manual had no objections to or suggested changes for the Assembly's recommendation (November 4, 2002) to replace the Nominations and Elections Committee (*Statutes of the Faculty*, Chapter X, D) with an **Elections Committee** elected by the faculty. The President approved the Assembly's recommendation as proposed.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs / Dean of Faculty has approved **the Minor in Global Business** and has not approved the **B.A. in Finance**. (See Minutes of March 3 Assembly meeting.)

### 2. **Call to Order and Minutes.** The meeting was called to order at 2:10 PM. The Minutes of the March 3 meeting were approved by Unanimous Consent.

### 3. **President's Address.** Sister Therese began by asking for a moment of silent prayer in memory of Sister Mary Christopher O'Rourke, RSM, fourth President of Salve Regina and member of the faculty, for Maureen Lareau, a retired member of the Nursing Department and for those suffering the ravages of war and injustices in our nation and around the world. Sister Mary Christopher joined the faculty in 1949, and chaired the Sociology Department prior to her inauguration as President in 1968. Maureen Lareau joined the Nursing Department faculty in 1969 and taught at the University until her retirement in 1998.

The President thanked the faculty for its diligence, hard work, and commitment in its dedicated efforts to design a new and distinctive core curriculum. She and the Board of Trustees were particularly impressed by the goals and learning objectives defined for the program. The four goals are clearly rooted in the University's commitment to a liberal education with a Catholic identity and speak to preparing students well to meet the demands of the future. They also provide the cultural characteristics of an institution grounded in the traditions of the Sisters of Mercy.

The greater sense of clarity implied by the careful delineation of learning objectives defines the courses that may be included in the core, linking them in a common vision and with a common set of purposes. With its four-year plan, the core has an innovative and direction-setting structure that distinguishes it from a distributive model.

Courses of study that are described as "liberal" traditionally focus on questions that are cultural, historical, critical and theoretical—as opposed to courses in which skills and techniques dominate. The decision not to approve the studio and performance courses proposed for the new Core is in no way a reflection on the legitimacy or quality of these courses. These courses are held in very high regard. However, it is important that we consider the courses to be included in the Core together with the carefully delineated learning objectives. The work accomplished by the faculty was an innovative and direction-setting

move away from mere distribution requirements. The faculty's hard work in *defining* the goals and objectives, coupled with the philosophy and four-year structure of the Core distinguish it from a distributive model and give a real sense of delineated parameters for courses to be included in the Core. This does not mean that there can be no experiential learning in the Liberal Arts Core. It simply means that technique or skill should not be the dominant factor in a Core course. The Theater, Art and Music Departments are encouraged to develop courses with studio or performance components for potential inclusion in the Core. All new Core courses should be accepted by the Undergraduate Council, Core Curriculum Advisory Committee and Vice President for Academic Affairs before being submitted to the President for approval.

Sister Therese thanked the Faculty Advisory Committee on Salary and Benefits for their work. She referred to the statistics handed out to the Assembly: *Comparison Group of New England, New York, New Jersey Catholic Higher Education Institutions With Total Enrollment Between 1300 and 4500*. The President is approving a 3.5% increase in faculty salaries. This will place SRU 2003-2004 faculty salaries above the projected median of the average faculty salaries in the "comparison group" institutions. Salaries for adjunct faculty will remain the same at this time. To put this matter into perspective, the President mentioned that the increase in the Consumer Price Index for 2002 was 2%. She also noted that "We are in very difficult economic times." There are warnings of a possible worldwide recession because of a SARS epidemic and other international problems. "We must be very careful and exercise financial prudence and good planning."

The University's contribution to TIAA/CREF Retirement Plan will be (an amount equal to) 8% of the faculty salary up to \$44,106 and (an amount equal to) 10% above that amount. The University continues its commitment to the Tuition Exchange Program, and at this time the University plans to continue current health care and dental care benefits. Every effort is being made to maintain minimal increases for employee payments for health care benefits.

Sister Therese expressed appreciation to faculty members for their participation in the successful "Connections" day. As of this date, applications have increased by 16.9% over last year. The acceptance rate is 54%.

His Serene Highness Prince Hans Adam II of Liechtenstein will receive an honorary doctorate at Commencement. Trustee, alumna and President and General Manager of The *New York Times*, Janet L. Robinson, will deliver the Commencement address.

Sister Therese spoke about the Campus Heritage Preservation Plan Study funded by the Getty Trust, and the plans to renovate and expand Miley Hall. The "new lecture hall" in O'Hare is on schedule. A renovation of the Biology Department labs will be delayed for a year; the University is seeking funding for this project.

The President asked for questions and comments from the Assembly. Sister Therese ended her remarks by reminding faculty members that they are in a position to provide the kind of leadership that can bring Salve Regina University toward greater community, cooperation and harmony, as well as academic excellence. Disagreements are part of any group effort; conflicts and differences of opinion are inevitable. It is important that we are vigilant in our professionalism and that we attempt to understand the other person's viewpoint, including the underlying values and assumptions.

The challenge we share is to educate our students to cope effectively with the emerging and troubling world trends that are evident around us. We can do this only by showing support for and encouraging each other. The examples that faculty give to students, especially examples of compassion and consideration, are important and appreciated.

Unity of purpose and shared aims are most evident when we recognize in our daily work that everyone in our community contributes to the education of our students and the intellectual talents and creativity of different members of the faculty and staff are not only recognized and respected, but also called upon, combined and shared to advance our mission. This University community enjoys a richness of talent, dedication, commitment, scholarship and spirituality that, when united in purpose, forms a wonderful positive and powerful force.

The ongoing five-year planning process has been very successful. Our University mission is grounded in the traditions of the Sisters of Mercy and our planning flows from and supports this mission. Sister Therese thanked the faculty for their strong contributions toward the realization of one of our key goals:

“A learning community that generates new standards of excellence and is charged with intellectual challenge, diversity of thought, and centrality of purpose.”

4. **Treasurer’s Report.** There is a little over \$1400 in the Assembly’s account. Most of that will go to the End of the Year Party.
5. **Social Committee.** The End of the Year Party will be on May 20. A vegetarian meal is possible. Adjunct faculty are welcome. Heads of departments are encouraged to take copies of the invitation and give them to adjuncts. The cost of the meal for an adjunct is the same as the cost for a guest: \$35.
6. **Motion -- Protocol.** A Motion was presented by the Executive Committee and seconded to request that the administration include the Assembly’s *Protocol for Requesting the Faculty Assembly’s Involvement in Changes Concerning Curriculum and Educational Policy* (May 1, 2000) in the next edition of the Faculty Manual, following the Assembly’s Constitution, which is already in the Manual. (The complete text of the Motion is included in the online version of these Minutes.) The result of the paper ballot: YES 54; NO 15; ABSTAIN 3.

The Motion passed.

7. **Motion – Faculty Personnel Records.** A Motion was presented by the Executive Committee and seconded to request that the Faculty Manual describe the University’s policies on faculty personnel records and that those policies be made in light of the following: (a) Individual members of the faculty may request, in writing, an appointment to review their personnel file retained in the office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs / Dean of the Faculty. (b) Members of the faculty may request, in writing, that factual errors in these files be corrected. (c) Because University policies must reflect government regulations concerning the right to review records, the right to correct records, and the disclosure of information from these records, references to these regulations should be contained in the Faculty Manual. The result of the paper ballot: YES 54; NO 0; ABSTAIN 3.

The Motion passed.

8. **Department of Theatre Arts – Announcement of proposed changes in the Major.** Patricia Hawkridge announced that three new courses will be added to the curriculum: Script Analysis (required for the Major), Touring Theatre (elective for the Major), and Stage Combat (elective for the Major). To keep the required credits for the Major at 51, some performance courses will be dropped.
9. **Certificates of appreciation.** By Unanimous Consent, the Assembly authorized the Executive Committee to draw up certificates of appreciation for faculty who are retiring at the end of this academic year.

The meeting adjourned at 3:12 PM.

## Appendix

### Motion - Protocol

**The Faculty Assembly requests**

**that its *Protocol for Requesting the Faculty Assembly's Involvement in Changes Concerning Curriculum and Educational Policy (May 1, 2000)* be included in the next edition of the Faculty Manual, following the Assembly's Constitution, which is already in the Manual.**

**Rationale:** When the Protocol was proposed to the Faculty Assembly on May 1, 2000, its Rationale stated that colleges and universities usually involve a group like the Assembly in curriculum and educational policy changes for “practical managerial reasons.” Some of these reasons would be to: “(1) increase the collegial sense of working for a common purpose, (2) facilitate communication, cooperation, and planning, (3) avoid misunderstanding or working at cross purposes, and (4) protect the institution’s mission.”

The Protocol is an “etiquette guide” for faculty, departments, and Chairs. It defines what the Faculty Assembly considers to be collegiality and professional conduct for faculty in the area of curriculum change.

The Protocol is also intended to be a service to the administration. If an administrator receives a request for a curriculum or educational policy change and if the Protocol process has been followed, the administrator knows that the requested change has received an airing. This means that departmental faculty have reviewed the proposal, other departments have had a chance to respond if the change will have an impact on them, and there has been an opportunity to hear “second opinions.”

Placing the *Protocol* in the Faculty Manual will be a convenience to faculty and will increase the value of this document as a service to the University.

**History:** The *Protocol* was the Assembly’s response to the considerable dissatisfaction among faculty about the poor communication from department to department and even within departments about catalog changes that had a broad impact.

While the *Protocol* does specify general principles, “steps,” and “announcements” to improve communication among departments, it does not provide some details about the process and it does not establish a special committee. The thinking was that the process would need time to evolve.

On page 5, the *Protocol* states that “The Assembly would welcome any cooperative arrangement with the administration” in this project of improving communication about important catalog changes.

### **Motion – Faculty Records**

#### **The Faculty Assembly recommends**

**That the Faculty Manual describe the University’s policies on faculty personnel records and that those policies be made in light of the following:**

- 1. Individual members of the faculty may request, in writing, an appointment to review their personnel file retained in the office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs / Dean of the Faculty.**
- 2. Members of the faculty may request, in writing, that factual errors in these files be corrected.**
- 3. Because University policies must reflect government regulations concerning the right to review records, the right to correct records, and the disclosure of information from these records, references to these regulations should be contained in the Faculty Manual.**

**Rationale:** It is in the best interests of both the administration and the faculty to maintain factually correct records and to have a written policy about those records.

**History:** In the 1994-95 Faculty Manual (Appendix VII, p. 14.1) there was a policy on faculty records. The two subsequent editions of the Manual have not contained any policy.

The administration of a university maintains faculty personnel records. The above Motion requests that the administration establish a written policy on those records and also recommends aspects of a policy that would be important to the faculty.

The above Motion, if passed, would be sent to the Vice President for Academic Affairs / Dean of Faculty.